

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAB-01 SAM-01 IO-10 AID-05 /070 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5026

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY

SUBJ: TREATMENT OF SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

REF: DAMASCUS 2981

1. WE HAVE READ WITH GREAT INTEREST EMBASSY
DAMASCUS' EXCELLENT ASSESSMENT OF SYRIAN
POLITICAL SITUATION.

2. WE PARTICULARLY NOTE DISCUSSION PARA 3B
OF ASAD'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE STATUS OF SMALLER
SECTS INCLUDING JEWISH COMMUNITY, QUOTE ACCORD-
ING TO GOOD SOURCES, THE JEWS HAVE SINCE THE
ASAD TAKEOVER SEEN A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR
SITUATION WITH RELAXATION ON TRAVEL ABROAD AS ONE
MAJOR EXAMPLE. END QUOTE.

3. THIS IS FIRST TIME WE HAVE HEARD THAT SYRIAN
JEWS ARE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL ABROAD. OUR IMPRESSION,
AS WELL AS THAT OF ISRAELIS, IS THAT SYRIAN JEWS
ARE PROHIBITED FROM TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF
DAMASCUS AND ITS IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS. WE WOULD
APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY SPECIFIC INFORMATION
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AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY RE INSTANCES IN WHICH SARG

HAS PERMITTED TRAVEL BY SYRIAN JEWS ABROAD.

4. WE ALSO NOTE PARA 5 SYRIAN VIEW THAT QUOTE
IT IS NO LONGER HERESY TO TALK OF LETTING
HISTORICAL FORCES TAKE CARE OF ISRAEL AND TO
PLAY DOWN THE NEED, MUCH LESSS THE DESIRABILITY,
OF WAR END QUOTE, AND THAT THROUGH HISTORICAL
PROCESS ISRAEL LIKE CRUSADER KINGDOMS WILL FIND
ITS QUOTE PROPER PLACE IN THE LEVANT END QUOTE.

5. ISRAELIS ARE OF COURSE SENSITIVE ABOUT COM-
PARISONS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND CRUSADER
KINGDOMS, WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SEVERAL
ACADEMIC SYMPOSIA HERE IN RECENT YEARS. FOR
OBVIOUS REASONS, ISRAELIS REJECT THESIS THAT
THEY WILL MEET SAME HISTORICAL FATE AS CRUSADERS,
AND BELIEVE INSTEAD THAT THEIR RETURN TO AREA
IS COMPATIBLE WITH PRESENCE OF ARABS AND OTHER
COMMUNITIES IN REGION.
KEATING

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